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## **Disabilities Issues Committee**

March 29, 2012

Mercer County Administration Building, Room 211

**Present:** James Purcell (WIB Chair), Amy Schuler (TCNJ), Joyce Yon (One Stop ES Manager), Scott Elliott (Progressive Center for Independent Living), Kimberly Schneider (MCTS), Alice Curry-Sheret (MCTS), Tom Shaw (MC Human Services), Denise Murphy (PNC Bank), Judy Formalarie (State Employment Training Commission), Beverly Mills (Mercer WIB)

### **Opening and Introductions:**

WIB Chair Jim Purcell opened the meeting with introductions.

Jim began the meeting with a brief update on WIB initiatives for the past year, how the process directed the WIB to develop a three year Strategic Plan and restructure current WIB committees. He further discussed how the WIB's newly adopted Strategic Plan lead to the creation of these subcommittees (representing 4-5 growth sectors) and how they would fall under an overall Business Integration Committee. He further explained that under this new structure the Disabilities Issues Committee would be regarded as one of the industries. It is the hope of the WIB the new structure will eliminate silos and allow for more communication across committees.

### **State Employment Training Commission (SETC):**

Judy Formalarie, Senior Analyst for the SETC and State Disabilities Committee staff representative was present to discuss the role of the State. Judy explained the recent law regarding the certification/re-certification of WIBs. She further explained how WIBs are now mandated to meet legal requirements and how and will meet these requirements without micromanagement from the SETC.

Judy also discussed how the focus of the Statewide Disabilities Committee is not only about employment but includes issues around transportation and education. She also gave examples of the committee's long and short term goals and how they mainly to educate people as well as bring policies and recommendations to the appropriate audience. Judy suggested we look at what's going on at the local level in Mercer County; there's more opportunity to make a difference locally since disability issues affect all sectors.

Amy asked if there was any data available to share; Judy mentioned the SETC did not have data but available from the LWD Labor Analysis Office or the Department of Education.

Judy also mentioned that revised EEOC guidelines will be available soon; employers may not know they are in compliance because many employees do not disclose. There are a whole range of issues that may fall under the label of a disability.

Jim added that when the EEOC guidelines come out it will offer more clarity however since goals must be met how do we figure out how to get people to disclose?

Judy reiterated that not everyone is the same; having a disability covers a range of issues.

Committee discussed the problem associated with public perception and the unwillingness to disclose. Jim added it comes down to an education issue, that educating people is the first priority.

### **Review of WIB Disability Issues Committee Goals and Objectives:**

Jim asked everyone to take a look at the goals and objectives – committee discussed blending the Mission Statement and Goal to read: **“Enable individuals with disabilities to have universal access and integrated services to ensure that the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) policies and program strategies provide employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.”**

Tom asked if the focus was on One Stop related services. What about other programs and agencies currently working on initiatives that are not employment related or connected to the One Stop? He suggested the committee take another look at the documents. Perhaps we should not try to working on objectives until we find out what each of us is responsible for around the table.

Jim answered that the WIB deals with One Stop issues but this committee should focus on a broader outlook throughout the county; how to educate people that the One Stop is there to serve everyone. It’s the objective of the WIB to reach out to everybody in the community; the One Stop should be the first place employers go to find employees.

Judy added Tom’s question would fall under one of the objectives listed which is to “enhance linkages with community based programs.”

Scott agreed; it comes down to asset mapping. He further suggested the committee delay this portion until the next meeting so we can share what we all do, where we receive funding and the purpose.

Jim said this committee should identify programs within the County and not just at the One Stop. WE need to have this information coordinated so we know about services available in Mercer County.

Committee agreed this is a good starting point; organizing information as well as educating who is doing what so we can work together to bet the best benefit for these individuals.

Amy suggested an up-to-date resource guide. Jim agreed saying it can be a conduit for all services for the disabled throughout the county.

Bev asked the committee to make a list of contacts along with an agency bio and email her to begin the process of putting together a resource guide.

Tom asked Bev who should be on the disabilities committee; who should the committee be comprised? He suggested someone from the Mercer Chamber as well as key employers.

Meeting was adjourned – next meeting will be on **Thursday, May 31, 2012 (10:00 AM – 11:30 AM) — Mercer County Administration Building, 640 South Broad Street, Room 211.**